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UNCLAS LILONGWE 000686

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: NEW VOA-AFFILIATED INDEPENDENT RADIO STATION GOES
ON AIR

REF: LILONGWE 207

[1](#)1. Voice of America (VOA) has extended its partnership with an independent affiliate, Capital Radio, to bring non-government controlled radio broadcast to northern Malawi.

On July 19, Ambassador and PAS staff attended the Mzuzu launch ceremony of the new station, which significantly enhances the availability of unbiased news coverage for the region (reftel). Also in attendance were the station's executive officers, a VOA representative, the mayor of the city of Mzuzu, and various regional business leaders.

[1](#)2. Previously, the only radio broadcast in the area was Malawi Broadcasting Company (MBC) which has often been accused of biased news coverage, particularly during the recent presidential elections. Capital Radio, which is independently owned and operated and has had been in partnership with VOA since 1998, has a solid reputation for presenting unbiased news and generally reliable reporting. The partnership with VOA ensures access to an alternative radio news source in a country where rural illiteracy and poverty limit the effectiveness of other media.

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